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## THE HULLAH CONCERTS AT EXETER HALL.

The late public performances of Mr. Hullah's pupils at Exeter Hall, give satisfactory evidence of the steady progress which is being made by those students who have learnt the rudiments of music in classes where numbers are taught at the same time. The excellence of the music performed, and the skill with which it was executed by the choristers, is a complete answer to those, who, by their doubting sneers, endeavoured to bring about their own predictions of failure, when the merits of this system was first discussed and proposed to be carried into practice.

The two psalms by Mendelssohn, "When Israel out of Egypt came," and "Come let us sing," were novelties to a London audience, and the latter was performed for the first time in England on the 12th. We quote an able notice of this performance from *The Athenæum*.

EXETER HALL.—*The Mendelssohn Night*.—The performance given on Wednesday evening by Mr. Hullah's choristers (the word "pupils" having ceased to apply to the body of singers whom he directs in public), was as interesting as it was well executed. Its title renders expatiation on its nature and meaning superfluous. But national pride—a feeling totally distinct from national insolence—renders it impossible for us not to compare our own state with the condition of our friends in Paris. They gave a Mendelssohn Concert at the *Conservatoire* a few days since; after eulogies many, and self-gratulations not a few, producing on that occasion some of the few pieces of the Master's music which were already known to their audiences. Mr. Hullah's chorists—a body, it is needless to point out, in every respect less pretending—began their evening more worthily; by executing one of the few extended works of the composer which is entirely new to England,—namely, his *Ninety-fifth Psalm*.—These Psalms, by the way, form a distinct and peculiar group among the compositions of Mendelssohn,—to be measured against the Chandos Anthems of Handel. But inasmuch as a singular evenness of excellence pervades the younger composer's writings—whereas Handel, when the dramatic inspirations of Opera and Oratorio were not ministered to him by his subject, *did* sometimes flag.—Mendelssohn's Psalms stand higher in their special Catalogue than the music in company with which we here mention them. The one produced on Wednesday contains a chorus, "O come let us sing," to be cited as an example of continuous power and brilliancy—also, a stately and dignified movement (somewhat new in the application of accent which it exhibits), "For His is the sea,"—and a delicious *duetto* for two *soprani*. The closing chorus, too, is full of fine expression and true effect;—yet, from its being in G minor while the Psalm is in E flat, a certain dissatisfaction to the ear is produced; and this, we imagine, might have been avoided. After the Psalm, Mr. W. S. Bennett played some half-dozen from "*Lieder ohne Worte*"—to the great edification of the audience and the surprise of those who, like ourselves, could not have conceived it possible for the pianoforte heard alone to have produced so much effect in Exeter Hall. Then a selection from the songs *with* words was sung by Miss Duval, Miss Stuart, and Mr. Lockey—a delicious unaccompanied part-song by the chorus—and the *scena* from "*Ossian*" by Mr. Phillips. The second act of this concert consisted of "*The First Walpurgis Night*." Mr.

Willy's band was the orchestra. The Hall was very full; and the audience—to judge from the *encores*—were highly satisfied.

The public already enjoy a great advantage in being able to hear these great works so well performed at almost a nominal price; but when the New Hall, now in the course of building, be finished, there is little doubt that the increased facilities of a permanent orchestra, the continuation of careful practice, and more combined rehearsals, will effect a refinement and precision never yet attained.

## Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

THE LATE DR. CROTCH.—One of England's most eminent musicians has been gathered to his fathers, namely, Dr. Crotch, who died on the 29th of December, at the residence of his son, the Rev. W. R. Crotch, master of the grammar-school at Taunton, aged 72. At the very early age of three years he performed several pieces on the organ in a most extraordinary manner; some of the passages being produced by his knuckles tumbling over the keys. He possessed a most accurate ear, and could name any note struck on the pianoforte without seeing it. In the course of time Crotch became a very profound theorist, and at the age of 22 (just 50 years ago) he was appointed Professor of Music in the University of Oxford, which conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Music. In 1822, Dr. Crotch was appointed principal of the Royal Academy of Music. Dr. Crotch was born at Norwich, in 1775; for some time past he resided at Taunton. Although his dissolution was not unexpected, and he was fully prepared for it, yet it was awfully sudden, for it took place while surrounded by the family at dinner. Dr. Crotch was a fertile and able writer, with more talent than genius, and more good taste than originality. He wrote a vast number of pieces for the organ and pianoforte; and several good anthems and secular motetts. Among the latter, the most celebrated were his ode for five voices, "*Mona on Snowdon calls*;" and the charming composition, "*Methinks I hear the full celestial quire*." Of his two oratorios, "*Palestine*," and the "*Captivity of Judah*," the latter never became popular, though it is by no means without merit. "*Palestine*" has many beauties and fine ideas; but Crotch too often failed in working out his conceptions with sufficient ease and spirit. He always began well, but the hearer was generally tired before each piece was ended: One quartett, however, in *Palestine*, "*Lo, startled chiefs*," has deservedly taken its place in the recognized standard music of the age. His playing was of the old school; correct and steady in the highest degree, so as almost to produce the effect of a most perfect piece of machinery; yet perhaps wanting in variety and pathos. His arrangements from Handel are liked by some good judges; but to our taste they are overcrowded with notes, which bewilder the ear and destroy all clearness and unity. His volumes of Specimens of Music of all ages are found in every complete musical library. We fear he has not left his equal as a sacred composer in England.—*Rambler*.

## BRIEF CHRONICLE Continued.

**HARMONIC SOCIETY.**—The concert given by this Society on the occasion of the opening of the organ on the 9th of December was repeated by desire. As we have previously spoken of this concert, we shall not say more than that Mr. E. Rogers conducted, and Mr. Done presided at the organ, in the same efficient manner as before. The next performance of this Society will be the oratorio of *Judas Maccabæus*, when Mr. Done will conduct.—*Worcestershire Chronicle*.

**HARGREAVES CHORAL SOCIETY.**—On the 13th January this society gave a concert, the scheme consisting of a selection of sacred music from the works of Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Spohr, &c. The room was not so well filled as we have seen it on previous occasions. It was anticipated by many of the subscribers that an entire Oratorio would be given. The *Manchester Times* says—"The production of a sacred work by one of the great masters, complete in all its details, is a great achievement, creditable to the society, and gratifying to the musician as well as the amateur. We are anxious to see the people fed with the best food; and in art, equally desirous to have a unity and completeness in every programme emanating from an institution whose main object is to improve the taste of the people." We agree so far with the *Manchester Times*, but the decreased attendance which they record is the best proof how wrong it is to underestimate the good taste of audiences. We cannot, therefore, agree with the following:—"To a general body of subscribers a 'selection' is often more attractive, inasmuch as the gems from the works of various leading writers can be gathered together, forming one brilliant casket. The principal singers, also, making their own selections, and being unfettered by the requirements of the oratorio, produce more striking effects upon that part of an audience, at all times the greater proportion, which has not the advantage of a musical education,—we mean education in the most extended sense of the term, not only in the theory and science, but equally so in feeling and taste. So far, then, as general interest is concerned, a 'selection' has its advantages; and however the directors may desire to *educate* their subscribers, they must also study their taste as it is, or they know pretty well the treasury will suffer." It appears to us that the treasury would have benefitted by pursuing the sounder musical policy. The selection contained some fine gems, considered individually, from Haydn's *Mass No. 2*, Spohr's *Last Judgment*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mendelssohn's *St. Paul*, Handel's *Messiah*, *Jephtha*, *Judas Maccabæus*, *Israel in Egypt*, &c.—The *Manchester Times* says—"The beautiful chorus from *St. Paul*, 'Oh, be gracious!' which had ample justice done to it by both band and chorus, passed off to our great chagrin with next to no applause; we were preparing to join in an hearty encore, a compliment it well deserved"—but the cause of this appears evidently to have been its being heard without a possibility of knowing to what the words alluded. In its original place in the oratorio this chorus, from its illustration of the heathen music, its melody, and its strong contrast to the Jewish and Christian character of the music preceding and following, has always produced a most marked effect upon the audience.

**THE EASTERN HARMONIC SOCIETY.**—The members of this Society, who afford frequent opportunities to the inhabitants of the Eastern part of London, to hear an entire work of one of the great masters, at a very small charge for admission, and which is generally very well performed by instrumental and choral members, assisted by principal vocalists of eminence: on the 27th of December they gave Handel's *Messiah*; and the Hall was much crowded.

**MANCHESTER CONCERT HALL.**—The Directors of the Gentlemen's Concert gave, as usual, their Christmas performance of Handel's *Messiah*; but with increased strength in the choral department, a division which is always particularly effective in this town. The *Manchester Examiner*, in noticing this concert, says—"we cannot conclude without an expression of regret at the unceremonious exit of many parties before the close of the oratorio. If such works are to be given, they should be heard as a whole, or with only such omissions as may not interrupt the consecutive narration, such as was the case the last evening. The audience should be prepared, therefore to hear these works with something like completeness."

**NORTH LONDON CHORAL SOCIETY.**—This new effort for the advancement of music has been commenced under the direction of a committee, who have engaged Mr. T. F. Travers as conductor and teacher. The meetings of the society take place in the School-rooms adjoining St. Barnabas Church, Goswell-road. A class has already been opened for instruction in the rudiments of music; and an upper branch is in course of formation for the practising of Anthems and Madrigals. An opening address was delivered by Mr. Travers, and musical illustrations given by a select choir, at the close of which more than 100 members enrolled their names.

**THE HARMONIC SOCIETY** (S. Thomas Charter House).—This society gave a public specimen of the progress they had lately made, which appeared highly satisfactory to the friends who were present. Although the society is of recent formation, they already possess a good organ, erected in the Girls' School-room, in the Goswell-street Road. In close connection with this society is another, called THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR SOCIETY, which meets every Friday evening for the practice of Church Services, Chants, and Psalmody.

**OXFORD CHORAL SOCIETY.**—The performance of the Oratorio, *The Messiah*, which took place at the Star Assembly Room, was, as we anticipated, greeted by a crowded audience. The whole performance was characterised by a precision and spirit in its execution highly creditable to the members of the society. It afforded an exemplification that there is sufficient talent in this city to undertake any work of the great composers. Messrs. Reinagle and Sharp presided; and we think our fellow-citizens are much indebted to those gentlemen, and the members, for the great treat afforded on this occasion. We trust that the very successful beginning will induce the members to venture on similar performances, and we are well satisfied they will always command crowded audiences.—We hear that the committee will recommend that the Oratorio be repeated.—*Oxford Chronicle*.

Master R. HOFFMAN ANDREWS, son of a professor in Manchester, has made a most favourable impression upon the *dilettanti* of New York. His performance of Mendelssohn's Grand Concerto, in D minor, with full orchestral accompaniments, being most enthusiastically *encored* at the Philharmonic Concert when he made his *debut*.

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